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PERSONALIZED SAFETY PLAN
FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Adapted From:

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Name: _____

Date: _____

Review Dates: _____

The following steps represent my plan for increasing my safety and preparing in advance for the possibility of further violence. Although I do not have control over my partner's violence, I do have a choice about how to respond to him/her and how to best get myself and my children to safety.

Safety during a violent incident. Women cannot always avoid violent incidents. In order to increase safety, battered women may use a variety of strategies.

I can use some or all of the following strategies:

- If I decide to leave, I will _____. (Practice how to get out safely. What doors, windows, elevators, stairwells or fire escapes would you use?)
- I can keep my purse and car keys ready and put them (place) _____ in order to leave quickly.
- I can tell _____ about the violence and request they call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my home.
- I can also tell _____ about the violence and request they call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my house.
- I can teach my children how to use the telephone to contact the police and the fire department.
- I will use _____ as my code word with my children or my friends so they can call for help.

If I have to leave my home, I will go to _____.
(Decide this even if you don't think there will be a next time!)

If I cannot go to the location above, then I can go to _____
or to _____.

I can also teach some of these strategies to some or all of my children.

When I expect we are going to have an argument, I will try to move to a space that is lowest risk, such as _____. (Try to avoid arguments in the bathroom, garage, kitchen, near weapons or in rooms without access to an outside door.)

I will use my judgment and intuition. If the situation is very serious, I can give my partner what he/she wants to calm him/her down. I have to protect myself until I/we are out of danger.

Safety when preparing to leave. Battered women frequently leave the residence they share with the battering partner. Leaving must be done with a careful plan in order to increase safety. Batterers often strike back when they believe that a battered woman is leaving a relationship.

I can use some of all of the following safety strategies:

- I will leave money and an extra set of keys with _____ so I can leave quickly.
- I will keep copies of important documents or keys at _____.
- I will open a savings account by _____ to increase my independence.
- Other things I can do to increase my independence include:

The domestic violence program number is _____.

I can seek shelter by calling this number.

I can keep change for phone calls on me at all times. I understand that if I use my telephone credit card, the following month the telephone bill will tell my batterer those numbers that I called after I left. To keep my telephone communications confidential, I must either use coins or I might get a friend to permit me to use their telephone credit card for a limited time when I first leave.

I will check with _____ and _____ to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money.

I can leave extra clothing with _____.

I will sit down and review my safety plan every _____ in order to plan the safest way to leave the residence.

The following friend or domestic violence advocate has agreed to help me review this plan: _____.

I will rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.

Safety in my own residence. There are many things a woman can do to increase her safety in her own home. It may be possible to do everything at once, but safety measures can be added step-by-step.

Safety measures I can use include:

- I can change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as possible.
- I can replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors.
- I can install security systems including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against the doors, an electronic system, etc.
- I can purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second floor windows.
- I can install smoke detectors and purchase fire extinguishers for each floor in my house or apartment.
- I can install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to my home.
- I will teach my children how to use the telephone to make a collect call to me and to _____ or _____ (friend, minister, other) in the event that my partner takes the children.
- I will tell people who take care of my children which specific people have permission to pick up my children and that my partner is not permitted to do so. The people I will inform about pick-up permission include:

(School)

(Day Care Staff)

(Babysitter)

(Sunday School Teacher)

(Teacher)

(Other)

- I can inform _____ (neighbor), _____ (pastor), and _____ (friend) that my partner no longer resides with me and they should call the police if he is observed near my residence.

Safety with a Protection Order. Many batterers obey protection orders, but one can never be sure which violent partner will obey and which will violate protection orders. I recognize that I may need the police and the courts to enforce my protection order.

The following are some steps that I can take to help the enforcement of my protection order:

- A. I will keep my protection order placed in _____ (location). (Always keep it on or near your person. If you change purses, that's the first thing that should go in.)
- B. I will give my protection order to police departments in the community where I work, in those communities where I usually visit family or friends, and in the community where I live.
- C. There should be a registry of protection orders that all police departments can call to confirm a protection order. I can check to make sure that my order is in the registry. The telephone number for the registry of protection orders is:
_____.

I can call the local domestic violence program if I am not sure about A, B, or C above or if I have any problems with my protection order.

I will inform my employer, my minister or pastor, my closest friend,
_____, and _____ that I have a protection order in effect.

If my partner destroys my protection order, I can get another copy by going to _____.

If my partner violates the protection order, I can call the police and report a violation, contact my attorney, call my advocate, and/or advise the court of the violation.

If the police do not help, I can contact my advocate or attorney and can file a complaint with the chief of the police department.

I can also file a private criminal complaint with the district justice in the jurisdiction where the violation occurred or with the District Attorney.

The number of the District Attorney's office in my area is: _____.

I can charge my battering partner with a violation of the protection order and the crimes that he commits in violating the order. I can call the domestic violence advocate to help me with this.

Safety on the job and in public. Each battered woman must decide if and when she will tell that her partner has battered her and that she may be at continued risk. Friends, family and co-workers can help to protect women. Each woman should carefully consider which people to invite to secure her safety.

I might do any or all of the following:

- I can inform my boss, the security supervisor, and _____ at work of my situation.
- I can ask _____ to help screen my telephone calls at work.
- When leaving work, I can take the following precautions:
_____.
- When driving home, if problems occur, I can _____.
- If I use public transit, I can _____.
- I can use different grocery stores and shopping malls to conduct my business and shop at hours that are different than those used when residing with my battering partner.
- I can use a different bank and take care of my banking at hours different from those I used when residing with my battering partner.
- I can also take the following precautions:

Safety and drug or alcohol use. Most people in this culture use alcohol. Many use mood-altering drugs. Much of this use is legal and some is not. The legal outcomes of using illegal drugs can be very hard on a battered woman, may hurt her relationship with her children and put her at a disadvantage in other legal actions with her battering partner. Therefore, women should carefully consider the potential cost of the use of illegal drugs. But beyond this, the use of any alcohol or other drugs can reduce a woman's awareness and ability to think and act quickly to protect herself from her battering partner. Furthermore, the use of alcohol or other drugs by the batterer may give him/her an excuse to use violence. Therefore, in the context of drug or alcohol abuse, a woman needs to make specific safety plans.

If drug or alcohol use has occurred in my relationship with the battering partner, I can enhance my safety by some or all of the following:

- If I am going to use, I can do so in a safe place with people who understand the risk of violence and are committed to my safety.
- I can also _____.
- If my partner is using, I can _____.
- I might also be able to _____.
- To safeguard my children, I might _____ and _____.

Safety and Emotional Health. The experience of being battered and verbally degraded by a partner is usually exhausting and emotionally draining. The process of building a new life for myself takes much courage and incredible energy.

To conserve my emotional energy and resources and to avoid hard emotional times, I can do some of the following:

- If I feel down and ready to return to a potentially abusive situation, I can _____, _____, or _____.
- When I have to communicate with my partner in person or by telephone, I can _____, or _____.
- I can try to use “I can...” statements with myself and to be assertive with others.
- I can tell myself, “_____” when I feel others are trying to control or abuse me.
- I can read _____ to help me feel stronger.
- I can call _____ and _____ as other resources to encourage and be of support to me.
- Other things I can do to help myself feel stronger are:

- I can attend workshops and support groups at the domestic violence program or at _____ or _____ to gain support and encouragement and strengthen my relationships with other people.

Items to be taken when leaving. When women leave partners, it is important to take certain items with them. Beyond this, women sometimes give an extra copy of papers and an extra set of keys clothing to a friend just in case they must leave quickly.

It is important to take the items noted on the list below. If there is time, some items might be taken and stored outside the home in advance. These items might best be placed in one location, so that if we have to leave in a hurry, we can grab them easily.

When I leave, I should take with me:

Identification for myself	Children’s birth certificates
My own birth certificate	Social Security cards
School and vaccination records	Money
Checkbook, ATM (Automatic Teller Machine) card	Credit cards
Keys – house/car/office	Driver’s license and registration
Medications for myself and my children	Welfare/WIC identification
Work permits	Green card
Passport(s)	Divorce/custody papers
Restraining Order	Bank books
Medical records – for all family members (including immunization records for school)	
Lease/rental agreement, house deed, mortgage payment book	

Insurance papers
Address book
Jewelry

Small saleable objects
Photographs or pictures
Children's favorite toys, blankets,
bottles, etc.

Phone numbers I need to have on hand:

Police Department – home: _____
Police Department – school: _____
Police Department – work: _____
Battered women's program: _____
County registry of protective orders: _____
Work number: _____
Supervisor's home number: _____
Minister or pastor: _____
Other important numbers: _____

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